WILLIAM R. KING

J. B. D. MEEDS.

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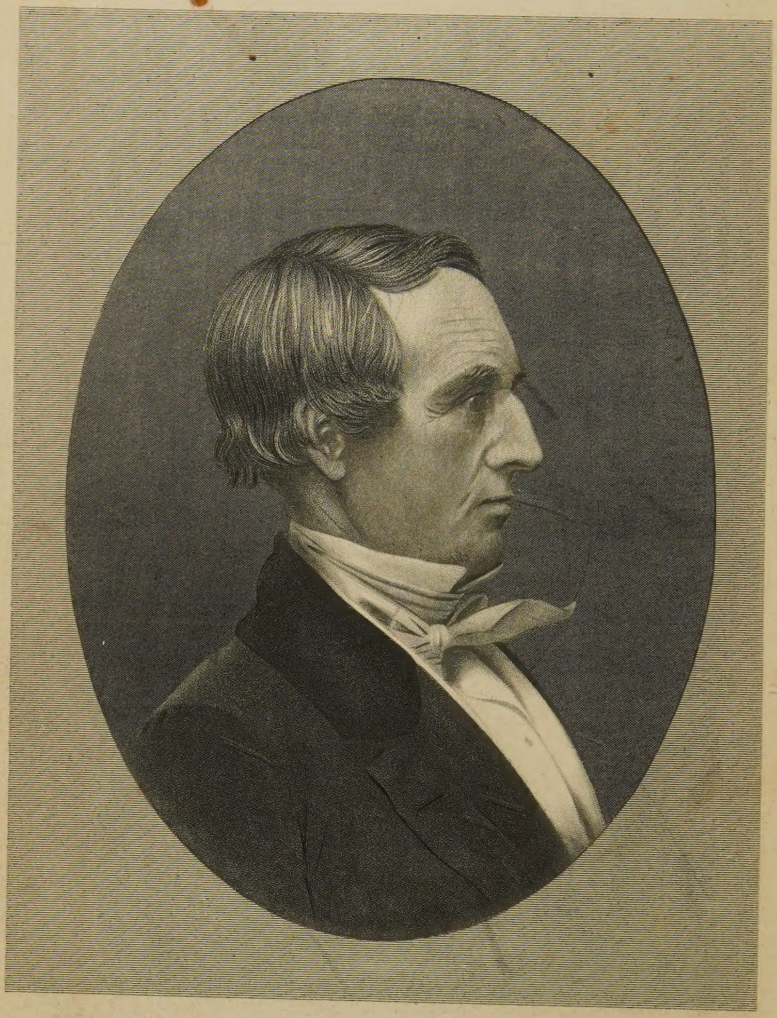

William R King

Engraved by W. H. Dougal
from a Daguerreotype by Whitehurst

WASHINGTON D.C.
1854

OBITUARY ADDRESSES

ON THE

Occasion of the Death

OF THE

HON. WILLIAM R. KING,

OF ALABAMA,

VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES:

DELIVERED IN THE

Senate and House of Representatives, and in the Supreme Court of the United States,

EIGHTH AND NINTH DECEMBER, 1853

WASHINGTON:
PRINTED BY ROBERT ARMSTRONG.
1854.

In the House of Representatives of the United States.

DECEMBER 19, 1853.

Resolved, That the members of the House Committee on Printing cause to be published, and bound in pamphlet form, in such manner as may seem to them appropriate, for the use of the House, thirty thousand copies of the proceedings of the Senate and House of Representatives, and the addresses of the members, in regard to the death of the late Vice-President of the United States, the Hon. WILLIAM R. KING, together with so much of the President's Message of the present Session as relates thereto, and the proceedings of the Supreme Court of the United States on the same subject.

Attest,

JOHN W. FORNEY.

Clerk H. R. U. S.

Death of William R. King.

Extract from the Annual Message of the President of the United States to Congress.

"SINCE the adjournment of Congress, the Vice-President of the United States has passed from the scenes of earth, without having entered upon the duties of the station to which he had been called by the voice of his countrymen. Having occupied, almost continuously, for more than thirty years, a seat in one or the other of the two Houses of Congress, and having by his singular purity and wisdom secured unbounded confidence and universal respect, his failing health was watched by the nation with painful solicitude. His loss to the country, under all the circumstances, has been justly regarded as irreparable."

Obituary Addresses.

SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES,

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 8, 1853.

Mr. HUNTER, of Virginia, rose and addressed the Senate as follows:

SINCE the adjournment of the last Congress, an event has occurred which it becomes us to notice. The American people have lost a Vice-President, and the Senate a Presiding Officer, by the death of WILLIAM R. KING, who departed this life in April last, at his home in the State of Alabama. I rise, as the Senators from that State are unavoidably absent, to ask that we may pause for a day at least in our deliberations upon the affairs of life, to devote it to the memory of one who was bound to us by so many personal and official ties. Surely, sir, there are none within the limits of this wide-spread Confederacy, to whom the life and services of WILLIAM R. KING are known, who would not be ready with some offering, either of public respect or personal affection, to bestow upon his tomb. There have been few public men, whose lives have been as long and

as active as his, who have made more friends; and none, I am sure, ever left fewer enemies. Nor was his one of those cold and impassive characters which shed their light without heat, but its kindly influences fell with genial and friendly warmth within whatever circle he might move.

It is a happy thing for a country when the lives of its public men may be thrown freely open to the world, and challenge its closest scrutiny, with a consciousness on the part of the friendly critic that there is no blot to be concealed, and no glaring fault which a love of truth forbids him to deny, and his own sense of right scarcely allows him to palliate. Here, at least, is a public man, in whose life there can be found no instance of a mean or equivocating action, none of a departure from the self-imposed restraints of a refined and lofty sense of honor; and none in which either the fear of man or the seductions of ambition tempted him to a deed which could destroy either his own self-respect or the respect of others for him. He trod the difficult and devious paths to political preferment long and successfully, and yet he kept his robes unsoiled by the vile mire which so often pollutes those ways. It is said, that the story of every human life, if rightly told, may convey a useful lesson to those who survive. Of all the public men whom I have known, there are none whose lives teach more impressively the great moral of the strength which public virtue gives than that of Colo-

nel KING. His was an instance in which greatness was achieved without the aid of those brilliant qualities whose rare assemblage the world calls genius, but by what is better far, a sound judgment, a resolute purpose to pursue the right, and a capacity to gather wisdom from experience.

He was no orator, and yet from the force of character he could wield an influence which mere oratory never commanded. He had none of that presumptuous self-confidence which so often misleads ourselves and others, and which, though a dangerous, is still a commanding quality; but he knew how to inspire a people with a just confidence in the soundness of his judgment and the integrity of his purpose, so as to be looked to as a safe depositary of trust and power.

Although gentle and kind in his intercourse with others, he could be stern enough when the public interests or his personal honour required it. He was a man, sir, whose whole soul would have sickened under a sense of personal dishonor.

It is not surprising, then, that each step in the political career of such a man should have been crowned with public honors. At the age of twenty-one he was elected to the Legislature of North Carolina, his native State, where he served until he was made Solicitor. In that capacity he acted for two years; at the expiration of which time he was again returned to the Legislature, in which body he served during the years 1808–9. In 1810, being then

twenty-five years of age, he was sent to the House of Representatives of the United States, where he served from 1811 to 1816, when he resigned to go abroad as Secretary of Legation to Mr. Pinckney, our Minister to Russia. Upon his return he emigrated to Alabama, where he was almost immediately sent to their Constitutional Convention.

And at the first session of the first Legislature which assembled afterward, he was sent to the Senate of the United States from the State of Alabama, where he may be said to have served continuously, until his election to the Vice-Presidency, with the exception of two years, when he was Minister to France. Finally, he was elected the Vice-President of the United States by a large majority of the American people. As he ascended step by step to this elevation, his vision seemed to grow with his horizon, and when the occasion came, he was always found equal to it. For, to the aid of a sound judgment, he brought, as he grew older, the wisdom of a large experience.

His political career may be said to have been one triumphant march through life; a march in which his step neither faltered nor stumbled, in ascending to that place which was, perhaps, the chief object of his aspiration. And yet, as if to show that even the most successful of men must sooner or later feel the emptiness of the earthly objects of our usual pursuit, that much-prized honor was to him the Dead-Sea

fruit, which turns to ashes on the lips. It came, but it came too late. The breath of public applause could not revive the flame which flickered in the lamp of life. In vain did the assiduity of relatives and friends surround him with affectionate care. In vain did the aspirations of a whole people ascend to Heaven for his recovery. The balmy influences of neither sea nor sky could revive or restore him. When the public messenger came to clothe him with the forms of office, his chief earthly wish was to see his home once more, and, in the midst of familiar scenes, to die among his friends. His desire was gratified. Life and its busy scenes on this side the grave are now closed on him for ever. But its tale yet remains to be told. Not by me, sir, or at this time. But it will be told in the chronicles of his State hereafter, when it may become a labor of love to some of her sons to write the story of its founders and sages. It will be told in our own political history, by whoever may portray the stirring and eventful scenes in which he acted a prominent and useful part. It will be told, too, and perhaps heard, with most interest in the traditions of a family of which he was the ornament and pride.

Mr. President, those to whom our people have been long accustomed to look, in times of difficulty and emergency, for counsel and opinion, are falling fast around us. It is an anxious thing to feel their loss at a period like this, pregnant with change, and

teeming, perhaps, with great and strange events. The men we cannot recall; but let us preserve their memories; let us study their teachings; and it will be well if, in many respects, we shall follow their examples.

I offer the following resolution:—

Resolved, That from respect to the late WILLIAM R. KING, Vice-President of the United States, and President of the Senate, the chair of the President of the Senate be shrouded with black; and, as a further testimony of respect to the memory of the deceased, the members of the Senate will go into mourning, by wearing crape on their left arm for thirty days.

Ordered, That the Secretary of the Senate communicate this resolution to the House of Representatives.

MR. EVERETT, of Massachusetts.

MR. PRESIDENT:—I have been requested to second the motion which has just been made by the Senator from Virginia. I do so with great cheerfulness. It was my good fortune to enjoy the acquaintance of the late Vice-President—I hope, even some portion of his friendly regard—for a longer period, probably, than most of those within the sound of my voice; a period of nearly thirty years. Such being the case, I feel as if I ought not to remain silent at this last moment, when our relations to him as mem-

bers of this Senate are, by the performance of this day's melancholy duty, about to be closed for ever.

There is an ancient maxim, Sir, founded at once in justice and right feeling, which bids us "say nothing but what is good of the dead." I can obey this rule, in reference to the late Vice-President, without violating the most scrupulous dictates of sincerity. I *can* say nothing but what is good of him, for I have never seen or heard any thing but good of him for thirty years that I have known him, personally and by reputation.

It would hardly be expected of me to attempt to detail the incidents of the private life or the public career of the late Vice-President. That duty belongs to others, by whom it has been, or will no doubt be, appropriately performed. I regret, particularly on this occasion, the unavoidable absence of our colleagues from Alabama. It is the province of those of us not connected with him by political associations, especially of those inhabiting remote parts of our common country, to express their cordial concurrence in the affectionate praises pronounced by his fellow-citizens and neighbors.

Few of the public men of the day had been so intimately associated with the Senate as the late Vice-President. I think he had been a member of the body for more years than any person now belonging to it. Besides this, a relation of a different kind

had grown up between him and the Senate. The Federal Constitution devolves upon the people, through the medium of the Electoral Colleges, the choice of the presiding officer of this body. But whenever the Senate was called to supply the place temporarily, for a long course of years, and till he ceased to belong to it, it turned spontaneously to him.

He undoubtedly owed this honor to distinguished qualifications for the chair. He possessed, in an eminent degree, that quickness of perception, that promptness of decision, that familiarity with the now somewhat complicated rules of congressional proceedings, and that urbanity of manner, which are required in a presiding officer. Not claiming, although an acute and forcible debater, to rank with his illustrious contemporaries, whom now, alas! we can mention only to deplore—with Calhoun, with Clay, and with Webster, (I name them alphabetically, and who will presume to arrange them on any other principle,) whose unmatched eloquence so often shook the walls of this Senate—the late Vice-President possessed the rare and the highly important talent of controlling, with impartiality, the storm of debate, and moderating between mighty spirits, whose ardent conflicts at times seemed to threaten the stability of the Republic.

In fact, sir, he was highly endowed with what Cicero beautifully commends as the *boni Senatoris prudentia*, the "wisdom of a good Senator;" and in

his accurate study and ready application of the rules of parliamentary law, he rendered a service to the country, not perhaps of the most brilliant kind, but assuredly of no secondary importance. There is nothing which more distinguishes the great national race to which we belong, than its aptitude for government by deliberative assemblies; its willingness, while it asserts the largest liberty of parliamentary right, to respect what the Senator from Virginia, in another connection, has called the self-imposed restrictions of parliamentary order; and I do not think it an exaggeration to say, that there is no trait in its character which has proved more conducive to the despatch of the public business, to the freedom of debate, to the honor of the country—I will say, even, which has done more to establish and perpetuate constitutional liberty.

The long and faithful senatorial career of the late Vice-President received at last its appropriate reward. The people of the United States, having often witnessed the disposition of the Senate to place him at their head, and the dignified and acceptable manner in which he bore himself in that capacity, conferred upon him, a twelvemonth since, that office, which is shown by repeated and recent experience to be above the second, if not actually the first, in their gift; the office which placed him constitutionally and permanently, during its continuance, in the chair of the Senate.

A mysterious dispensation of Providence has nipped these crowning honors in the bud. A disease, for which the perpetual summer and perfumed breezes of the tropics afforded no balm, overtook him at an age when he might, in the course of nature, have reasonably looked forward to still many years of active service. Clothed by a special and remarkable act of Congress, even while under a foreign jurisdiction, with the last constitutional qualification to enter upon the high office to which he had been elected, he returned, not to exercise its functions, but to seek his much-loved home, and there to die.

Thus, sir, he has left us to chase for a little while longer the shadows which he has exchanged for unutterable realities. He has left us prematurely for every thing but his spotless name, and his entrance on the well-earned honors of his unambitious career. And we, Senators, for all the interchange of kindness; for all the cordial intercourse of private life; for all the acts of co-operation in the public service, to which for at least four years the Senate was looking forward in its connection with him, have nothing left to offer to his friends and his memory, but the unavailing tribute of this last mournful farewell.

Mr. President, I second the resolutions of the Senator from Virginia.

MR. CASS, of Michigan.

MR. PRESIDENT:—Again has death invaded the high places of our land, and has taken from us a citizen distinguished by his talents, his worth, and his services, and enjoying the confidence and affection of his countrymen. In the Providence of God, these visitations come to warn us that none are exempt from the decree, that in life we are in the midst of death, and that "Be ye also ready" is a solemn admonition announced to us from the cradle to the grave, by the mighty and the lowly, as they successively fall before the great destroyer. The lesson is the more impressive, the higher is the position, and the more eminent the character of him whose departure we may be called upon to mourn. And when one who occupied the second station in our country is summoned from the duties of this life to the responsibility of that which is to come, as the loss is a national one, the manifestations of public sympathy and the acknowledgment of the public grief should be national also. Our lamented friend, the late Vice-President, has been taken from us, full of years indeed, and of honors, but in the midst of his usefulness, and when he was just prepared to enter upon the high career to which he had been called by the American people. Upon this occasion I desire to do little more than to express those sentiments of affectionate regard with which an acquaintance of many years had inspired me, leaving to

others, who have this day well fulfilled the task, to present those features of his character and services which endeared him to his countrymen in life, and will endear to them his memory, now that the scenes of life are for ever closed upon him.

His career was eminently useful and fortunate; and in the whole range of American statesmen there are few, indeed, to whom our youth can better look, when seeking models of imitation and encouragement, than to WILLIAM R. KING.

Firm but courteous, frank and fearless, of high honor and irreproachable morals, he brought a vigorous intellect, and varied and extensive information, to the public councils; and the ripe fruit of his experience, joined to these endowments, gave conviction to his opinion, and authority to his example. We always heard him with attention, for he elucidated every subject he investigated, and brought to our discussions the stores of his knowledge and experience, with a manner as unassuming as it was captivating. While loving the State in which he so long resided, and which had given him so many proofs of confidence and affection, he loved also our common country, and at home and abroad proved himself the true patriot, the able and faithful citizen. In all the relations of private life he was loved and honored, as well from the amenity of his manner as from the kindness of his heart, and in the social circle he was the very model of the accomplished

gentleman. For almost half a century he was in the public service, and was intimately connected with many of the great events which marked that long and stirring period, and he proved himself equal to all the circumstances in which he was placed, sustaining himself with signal ability among men whose renown is written in imperishable characters upon the history of our country.

But better than all this, and above all this, he was a sincere Christian; adding another to the long list of eminent men who have searched the gospel of Jesus and have found it the will and word of God. In his last illness, when the world and the things of the world were fast fading before him, he found hope and consolation in the promises of the Saviour; and calmly surveying the approach of death, he looked beyond its power to the glorious immortality promised to the believer. The places that knew him will know him no more; but, though dead, his memory is embalmed in the hearts of his countrymen, and there it will live, honored and cherished, long after all those who are now taking part in this tribute to his worth shall have followed him in the journey, where, for a brief space, he has preceded us through the dark valley of the shadow of death.

MR. DOUGLASS, of Illinois.

I can scarcely hope to add any thing of value to what has been so well said by others. For the

last eight months, the mournful event which is now officially announced to the Senate has been known, felt, and lamented by us all. In the mean time, we have passed through scenes well calculated to engross our thoughts and divert our attention, if not to obscure the freshness of the first impression, or assuage the keenness of that sorrow which filled every heart. But no matter what the lapse of time or its results, the meeting of the Senate, and the absence of one whom all admired and loved, and delighted to greet and honor, call up associations and reminiscences which impart to the occasion all the effects of a sudden and unexpected bereavement. Those whose happiness it was to be associated with Colonel KING in public duty and private intercourse, are alone capable of realizing the extent of our loss. His example in all the relations life, public and private, may be safely commended to our children as worthy of imitation. Few men in this country have ever served the public for so long a period of time, and with a more fervent patriotism or unblemished reputation. For forty-five years he devoted his energies and talents to the performance of arduous public duties—always performing his trust with fidelity and ability, and never failing to command the confidence, admiration, and gratitude of an enlightened constituency. While he held, in succession, numerous official stations, in each of which he maintained and enhanced his previous reputation, yet the

Senate was the place of his choice, and the theatre of his greatest usefulness. Here he sustained an enviable reputation during a period of thirty years' senatorial service, always manifesting his respect for the body by his courtesy and propriety of deportment. Here, where his character was best understood, and his usefulness and virtues most highly appreciated, his loss, as a public man and a private friend, is most painfully felt and deeply lamented.

MR. CLAYTON, of Delaware.

I shall only pay a debt of honor to the spirit of the dead, by offering my humble testimonial in addition to what has been so appropriately and eloquently expressed by others. A quarter of a century has elapsed since I became acquainted with WILLIAM R. KING as a brother Senator on this floor. During the greater part of that long period I was an attentive observer of his course as a public man, and I cannot in justice remain silent when an opportunity is offered of paying a tribute to the memory of one who so honorably deserved it.

That man who, dying, can be said to have passed his days without a stain upon his reputation, has justly earned the honors due to a wellspent life. The Roman poet has immortalized the sentiment—

"Nec male vixit, qui natus moriensque fefellit."

But WILLIAM R. KING, who was everywhere known,

may be truly said to have passed from the cradle to the grave without a blot upon his name.

The chief part of his history is written upon the records of this Senate, in which his high character as a legislator and a statesman was firmly established. I would avoid the commonplaces employed on occasions similar to the present when speaking of such a man. It is not enough to say of him that he performed his duties well as a member of the Senate. He was distinguished by the scrupulous correctness of his conduct. He was remarkable for his quiet and unobtrusive, but active, practical usefulness as a legislator. He was emphatically a *business member* of the Senate, and without ostentation, originated and perfected more useful measures than many who filled the public eye by greater display, and daily commanded the applause of a listening Senate. He never sought with some of his contemporaries to earn a brilliant reputation by the exhibition of splendid powers of oratory; and, to his honor be it spoken, he never vexed the ear of the Senate with ill-timed, tedious, or unnecessary debate. He preferred to be checked for silence rather than to be tasked for speech. Yet, on all occasions when a great issue was before the country, calling for the exercise of manly firmness, courage, and patriotism, Mr. KING was abreast with those who stood foremost for the safety and the glory of the Republic.

He graced the chair of the Senate longer than

any other man that ever occupied it—not continuously, or by virtue merely of repeated elections as our temporary President, but often also at the request of the Presiding Officer. I think he was thus engaged in the performance of the duties of President of the Senate during the greater part of the terms of five Vice-Presidents; and at last he reached the second office in the gift of the people—an office excelled in honor only by one other in the world. To preside over such an assembly as the Senate of the United States, and to do that as he did it, was enough to satisfy the highest aspirations of an honorable and patriotic ambition. In this elevated position he was distinguished (and I may add he was never excelled) for the dignity of his deportment, the impartiality of his decisions, and the promptness and fidelity with which he maintained the order and enforced the rules of this body. I can remember no instance in which he lost sight of what was due to his own self-respect or the rights of his political opponents, by the indulgence of party feelings in the chair. Presiding, as he did, when party spirit raged in torrents of fire, all just men will admit that he could have been no common man who maintained his high character for justice and impartiality at such a period. A little man, at that time, would have shown his littleness by yielding himself up as an instrument of oppression to the minority. But he sought an honest and enduring fame, and he obtained it without the em-

ployment of any unworthy means, or the slightest sacrifice of principle. He engaged no hireling press, no mercenary libeller to traduce others, or to trumpet his own fame. He paid respect to the feelings of others, and rigidly exacted the observance of the same respect for himself. Generous as he was brave, his conduct to his opponents suffering under defeat, was always liberal and kind; and, by his inflexible truth, he won the entire confidence of men of all parties in his own unblemished honor.

Others have spoken of his services in other places, but I shall speak of nothing to which I was not a witness. While Mr. KING remained in the Senate, there was still one member of the body who had served with me on this floor during the memorable session of 1829–30, and the earlier years of President Jackson's administration. It is melancholy to reflect that nearly all the rest of the Senators of that period have closed their career on earth, and that not one of those who survive remains here with me to-day.

The master-spirits of the time were among the Senators of that day. I speak not of the living. But here, then, were Clay, Calhoun, Forsyth, Webster, and Livingston, the learned and laborious Woodbury, the astute Grundy, the witty, sarcastic, and ever-ready Holmes, the classic Robbins, and, among many others justly distinguished, the graceful and accomplished orator of Carolina, Robert Y. Hayne,

"Whose words had such a melting flow,
And spoke of truth so sweetly well,
They dropp'd like the serenest snow,
And all was brightness where they fell."

Oh! I could enumerate, and delight to dwell on, the virtues of them all—and then revert to him whose fame we now commemorate, as to one not inferior in integrity and honor to the proudest among them. But these reminiscences are attended by the mournful reflection that our connections with them in this world are ended for ever—

"Around us, each dissever'd chain
In sparkling ruin lies,
And earthly hands can ne'er again
Unite those broken ties."

The resolutions were unanimously adopted.

MR. HUNTER.

As a further mark of respect to the memory of the deceased, I move that the Senate do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to, and the Senate adjourned to Monday.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 8, 1853.

A MESSAGE was received from the Senate by the hands of ASBURY DICKENS, its Secretary, as follows:

IN SENATE, DECEMBER 8, 1853.

Resolved unanimously, That from respect to the late WILLIAM R. KING, Vice-President of the United States, and President of the Senate, the chair of the President be shrouded with black; and as a further testimony of respect for the memory of the deceased, the members of the Senate will go into mourning by wearing crape on the left arm for thirty days.

Ordered, That the Secretary of the Senate communicate this resolution to the House of Representatives.

The message having been read—

MR. HARRIS, of Alabama, rose and said:

MR. SPEAKER:—The tidings of the mournful event which the resolution from the Senate is intended to commemorate, have months ago been heralded to every hamlet of our wide-spread confederacy; and the generous hearts of even distant

lands have mingled their regrets with our own, that a wise and virtuous and distinguished man has been stricken from the number of earth's children. Tears have ceased to flow; and hearts the most deeply penetrated by the afflicting visitation of Providence, have learned to contemplate it with that spirit of resignation which time ever supplies as a medicine for the sorrows of earth.

But in conformity with a solemn and impressive usage, the Senate, over whose deliberations the distinguished dead so long presided with such marked ability, pauses from its labors to consecrate a brief day to the memory of WILLIAM R. KING. And while the sympathizing sons of sister States gather around his bier, I crave the indulgence of the House of Representatives, while, in behalf of the State of Alabama, I offer the tribute of her homage and respect to the memory of her most distinguished citizen.

Recent events, familiar to us all, render unnecessary any thing more than a cursory allusion to the political services of WILLIAM R. KING.

He was born on the 7th day of April, 1786, in the State of North Carolina. Coming into being almost contemporaneously with the adoption of our Federal Constitution, his eventful and protracted life covers one of the most remarkable periods in the history of the world. When the dawn of mature manhood first began to open upon him, the great experiment of self-government, whose principles were

evolved from our Revolutionary struggle, had just fairly emerged from the misty domain of speculation, and assumed the form and semblance of a philosophic truth. Instinct with the spirit of the age, and true, as he proved to be through life, to the principles of the republican school, he connected his fortunes with that party which claimed, as the exponents of its political faith, Jefferson and Madison.

He had no sooner attained his majority than he was elected a member of the Legislature from his native county. He was re-elected the ensuing year; but the Legislature of which he was a member, having conferred upon him the Solicitorship of the judicial circuit in which he resided, he resigned his seat in that body. After holding the office of Solicitor for two years, he was again returned to the Legislature for the years 1808–9. In 1810, so soon as he had attained the age prescribed by the Constitution, he was elected a member of Congress from the Wilmington district, in which body he continued to serve until the year 1816. During this period of American history, there were just ascending from the verge of the political horizon, and rapidly tending toward the zenith, names which were destined to illustrate the greatness of our country, and impress themselves imperishably upon her monumental records. That immortal triumvirate, Calhoun, Clay, and Webster, for

whose decease the sable habiliments of a nation's wo have scarce disappeared, were just then beginning to exhibit the giant proportions of their unmatched intellects, and entrancing their countrymen and the world by the electric power of their resistless eloquence. Randolph and Lowndes were there too—and other great names indelibly secured by the diamond pen of history's muse. Among these stood WILLIAM R. KING, a co-worker and a compeer. Differing somewhat from them all in many of those great attributes of mind, which dazzle and lead captive the admiring throng; yet in all the elements which go to make up the useful legislator—in prudence, caution, firmness, wisdom, and patriotism—occupying with them the same proud pedestal; and lending his influence and his voice to the successful vindication of "free trade and sailors' rights."

In 1816, Mr. KING, having been tendered the appointment of Secretary of Legation under Mr. Pinckney, resigned his seat in Congress, and accompanied that distinguished statesman, first to Naples, and afterward to St. Petersburg. Having returned home at the expiration of two years, he determined to break from the endearments of his fatherland, and cast his fortunes in the then almost unpeopled wilds of distant Alabama. This land was now to constitute the theatre of his after usefulness. God gave him sufficient length of days to see "the wilderness blossom as the rose;" and be-

hold the territory which he had adopted as his home, emerge from its chrysalis state to the full-blown condition of a sovereign party to the Union, and, under the nurturing appliances of intellect and industry, attaining a degree of wealth and prosperity commensurate with his own increasing fame.

Soon after Mr. KING'S arrival in the Territory, he was deputed a delegate to the Convention which assembled to organize a State government. To the performance of the delicate and responsible duties of this new position, he brought the aid of that matured experience he had gathered in the councils of the Union, and was one of the most active and efficient of those who laid the foundations of our State polity. So soon as the constitution was put in operation, he was chosen one of the Senators from that State in the Congress of the United States. From that period, Mr. Speaker, to the time when the voice of all the people of the Union called WILLIAM R. KING to the second office in their gift—a period of more than thirty years, he continued to speak for Alabama upon the floor of the Senate; saving the brief period of two years—during which time he represented this government at the Court of St. Cloud. In verity, he was to Alabama a true and faithful son, as she was unto him a cherishing mother! Truly has he filled the measure of a patriot's duty, for his entire life was devoted to the service of his country.

As may justly be inferred, from the long and unchecked career of success which distinguished the life of Mr. KING, and the respect and confidence he always enjoyed, his popularity was not the result of those factitious aids which give to demagogues and political tricksters an ephemeral existence, but was the natural consequence and well-deserved recompense of his exalted qualities of head and heart. For forty years he brought to his country's use the rich gifts of his patriotism and his wisdom—the glowing energies of his early manhood, and the matured counsels of a wise and honorable old age. Intelligence, honesty, and fidelity distinguished the administration of every public trust confided to his hands. Amid all the fluctuations of public sentiment, and all the mutations of party, he pursued the path of duty by the light of principle, and dying, leaves behind him an example of consistency and public virtue, upon which the patriot may ponder with pleasure, and from which the mere aspirant for worldly honor may draw an instructive lesson. His life is a beautiful illustration of the truth, that the line of duty is alike the path of safety and the way to honor.

The personal character of Mr. KING was affluent in all those qualities which contribute to the formation of an almost perfect man. To wisdom and patriotism as a statesman, to love of right, and devotion to principle, he added a temper respectful

and courteous to others; a courage unquestioned, and honor intact. No stain blurred the pure ermine of his good name. Conceding to all men the full measure of what was their due, he was punctilious in the exaction of what was due to himself. Exempt from that acrimony which party collision too often engenders, and always tolerant of the opinions of others, he was inflexible and unswerving in the maintenance of his own—

"Vir justus, et tenax propositi."

In all those more intimate and tender relations which bound him to his friends, his kindred, and his servants, he was all that friendship could ask, or affection claim, or humanity and kindness enjoin. While in that higher and more solemn relation, which he bore to the Author of us all, he was exact and scrupulous in the discharge of all those duties enjoined by a regard for the sacred behests of religion;—and in the closing scenes of life's fleeting, final hour, he leaned with humble trust upon the merits of his Saviour.

"His life was gentle—and the elements
So mix'd in him, that nature might stand up
And say to all the world—'This was a man.'"

In the first month of this year, the Vice-President resigned his post of Presiding Officer of the Senate, with the vain hope that a winter residence in Cuba might ameliorate his health. But the balmy breezes

of the ocean gem could not relume the waning fire that flickered to its close. Death was demanding its victim, and the dying patriot felt that he must need obey the summons. He hastened home from Cuba to spend his last hours among the friends who watched with such intense solicitude his gradual decline. Like the imprisoned monarch whose life went out on the storm-rocked island of the sea, he did not wish to sleep upon a foreign strand, but rather on the banks of the Alabama, "in the bosom of the people he had loved so well," and served so faithfully. In the midst of that people he died—beneath that sod he takes his final rest. But a fragrance shall still cling around his memory, exhaled from the clustering virtues which beautified his character. Calmly he confronted the icy monster; and with Christian dignity, resigned him to his fate. "Be silent," said he, to the anxious friends around him, "let me die quietly." Silence prevailed, and quietly his noble spirit passed to the land of shadows.

> "He sat, as sets the morning star, which goes
> Not down behind the darken'd west, nor hides
> Obscured amid the tempests of the sky—
> But melts away into the light of heaven."

How fruitful, Mr. Speaker, in admonition to us, who were associated with Mr. KING in the direction of this great Government, and who now survive him, are the circumstances which give such melancholy prominence to the closing hours of his life.

Upon the full tide of an almost popular acclaim, he had been just elevated to one of the most exalted stations of the earth. But along with the flattering consciousness of popular confidence and merited promotion, came the stunning sense that life's decaying energies were sinking to the grave. While the joyous gratulations of an admiring people were welling up from the depths of the nation's heart, and falling with thrilling accents upon the ear of gratified ambition, there was mingling with them another voice from the spirit-land, whose tones were heard above the loud tumult of popular applause, and calling to the failing statesman—

"Child of the dust, come away!"

The garlands had been thrust upon the victim, only that it might prove a more fitting sacrifice for the altar, which already smoked for its immolation. What a humiliating mockery of earth's aspirations, which end in nothingness—of its evanescent honors, which vanish at the touch! and how strikingly suggestive of the solemn reflection that

"The paths of glory lead but to the grave."

Mr. Speaker, I offer the following resolution:

Resolved, That from an unfeigned respect to the late WILLIAM R. KING, Vice-President of the United States, and President of the Senate, the Speaker's chair be shrouded in black during the present session of Congress; and, as a further testimony of respect for the memory of the deceased,

the members and officers of this House will go into mourning, and wear black crape on the left arm for thirty days.

Resolved, As a further mark of respect, that this House do now adjourn.

MR. CHANDLER, of Pennsylvania, rose and said—

MR. SPEAKER :—The spectacle presented in this House, at the present moment, is replete with instruction and encouragement.

The representatives of a great nation pause, in the midst of the initiation of legislative business, to express respect for a citizen who owed his elevation less to those striking qualities that are sure to excite public interest and insure popular favor, than to those gentle virtues which are so slow to secure general appreciation.

The Congress of the United States, in paying the tribute of gratitude to the departed functionary, declares that it commemorates the virtue by which he achieved elevation, and thus it connects purity of social life with the honors of official distinction.

The Representatives from the State of Alabama have requested me to take a part in the discharge of the melancholy duties in which this House is now engaged. It is an honor to be called to do honor to the memory of the good; and patriotism finds a grateful exercise in recalling the obligations under which the nation rests to those who have done service to her in places of distinction.

I should have promptly declined the service, if I did not believe that my colleagues, the Representatives of Pennsylvania on this floor, shared in the sentiments of respect for the dead which I entertain, but which I shall so feebly express; and while they and their constituents, and mine, judge according to their various political creeds, of the public measures which are connected with the name and services of the deceased, they have looked through the mist with which party hostility and party partiality alike invest their objects, and have done honor to the purity of motive and the consistency of patriotism, in which those measures were proposed or advocated.

I do not suppose, that in the tribute which we are now paying to the memory of a distinguished statesman, we are acquitting ourselves, as the representatives of the people, of the indebtedness of the country for services through years of unremitted devotion. Sir, while the nation shall enjoy the prosperity with which she is now blessed, she will feel and confess her obligations to those whose talents, virtues, and devotion procured the blessing. And should adverse circumstances overtake us, we should then recall the lessons of wisdom and patriotism which the lives and services of our good men impart; and while we should lament the consequences of a neglect of their examples and precepts, we should do honor to virtues which we had ceased to imitate, and venerate the patriotism which we had forgotten to follow.

The gentleman who has preceded me has given to the House a sketch of the public services of the late Vice-President KING. It is an instructive lesson; one that we should "teach diligently unto our children." One that at the present time comes with peculiar pertinency, and seems to illustrate the nature of our institutions, and to encourage the growth of quiet, unobtrusive virtues, by showing the ability of the people to appreciate, and their willingness to reward them. The history of our country shows that consummate statesmanship may be combined with the possession and professional exercise of military skill. The halls of legislation, and the bureaus of the Departments have been the arenas of noble and successful efforts of those who came from the activity of the camp to take part in peaceful forensic contests, or to discharge the duties of ministerial office. And we have seen the accomplished warrior lay aside his military trappings, and assume the garb and discharge the duties of the first office of our nation.

But while these things show the versatility of genius, and the wonderful adaptation of mental powers, they lead sometimes to the apprehension that the people, who seemed so struck with the services of the military man, would overlook the unobtrusive qualities of the civilian, and forget that patriotism has its services and its sacrifices in the halls of legislation and the walks of diplomacy; and

that the qualifications for lofty place were to be manifested in the silent, laborious, unpretending privacy of the closet, as well as in the more stirring and striking duties of military life.

The official life of Mr. KING redeems the people of the United States from imputations of a false estimate by a false standard of the services of their public functionaries, and it shows how much confidence may be placed in their judgment of the capability of men to discharge distinguished trusts.

The manners of Mr. KING were unobtrusive, retiring, gentle. No appearance, no act of his could be regarded as challenging attention. He moved among his fellow-men with manifestations of constant respect for their rights and their positions; and among his fellow-legislators he was distinguished by that constant deference to others which is the characteristic of excessive modesty and available talents. Abroad, sir, in Europe, he presented himself with no demands, as a *man*, upon the consideration of others, and no claim to distinction, in the free use of his ample means. But as the representative of a nation of freemen, he claimed the regard which his representative character challenged, and he maintained social hospitalities with the profusion which his ample means warranted, and his generous patriotism suggested.

Mr. KING, sir, was a party man. Few men, Mr. Speaker, attain political distinction in a country like

ours without party attachments and party feelings. And none will more readily pardon Mr. KING for his efforts for party measures than those, who, differing from him in politics, know by the purity of their own motives how to do justice to the sincerity of those by which he was influenced; and this the more readily, because the courteous bearing of that distinguished man deprived his opposition of all appearance of bitterness, drew from the defeat of his opponents, when their defeat ensued, the sting of mortified self-esteem, or imparted to his own discomfort the ease of gentlemanly submission.

Sir, from the quiet walks of life, that seemed at first to promise little eminence, Mr. KING rose to the second office in this great republic; attaining that position, too, in the midst of all his country's greatness, in the midst of all her amplitude of extent, and in the midst of all her profusion of means; more than that, sir, in the midst of all her munificence of men.

Though absent, sir, absent to die, far from the immediate seat of his duties, yet the memory of his excellence and purity sustained him in the affection and respect of his brethren of the Senate chamber, who seemed to feel it a pleasure as well as a duty to testify to him their full appreciation of his conciliatory habits, his sagacity as a statesman, and his justice as their Presiding Officer.

The annunciation to-day of the death of Mr. Vice-

President KING comes to us, sir, with no surprise. The nation has already, in some form, manifested its regard for a faithful public servant. The announcement brings no monition of the brevity of human enjoyment and the uncertainty of human life. He had lived nearly to man's appointed time, and beyond man's common lot, and had enjoyed much more than ordinary honors. It comes not now, sir, to startle us into any manifestation of special sorrow. Months have passed since he breathed forth his gentle spirit to God who gave it: and the poignant grief which his death caused, even in his limited family circle has given place to the silent sorrow that occupies itself in a mournful, placid recollection of the virtues of the dead.

We listen, sir, to-day, to the formal annunciation of the demise of Mr. KING, that we may, by public demonstration, show to the world our respect for the high office which he vacated by his death, and our appreciation of the beautiful moral qualities and statesmanlike abilities by which he illustrated all offices in his life.

The addresses on this occasion, and the adoption of the resolutions which are now on the table, can add nothing to the future happiness of the dead—cannot augment the fame which his social virtues and his public career have earned. But, sir, they tell the world that a republic can be grateful to those who have done her service, and that republicans can

appreciate those gentle qualities which give dignity and honor to a statesman's life and insure peace and consolation to a Christian's death.

MR. MILTON S. LATHAM, of California, said:

MR. SPEAKER:—Gratitude for the kindness of a *friend*, as well as reverence for the greatness of a *man*, prompt me to unite my stranger voice with yours in this mournful requiem for the departed. And if an apology be needed, that thus early I claim your attention, let it be enough to say that from the lips now cold and fixed, and the voice now hushed in death, came first the encouraging words of counsel and incentive, the gentle tones of sympathy and feeling, that have placed me, to-day, among you. I could leave to the gentlemen who have preceded me, and to the quiet meditation of my own heart, the retrospect of his irreproachable life, and the rehearsal of the noble principles that he so long and firmly advocated, were it not that over every mountain and valley, every plain and ravine of California, are scattered thick the adopted homes of Alabamians, who, while the memories of their childhood are fresh, or the graves of their fathers green, can never fail, with you, to remember the *life* of the *statesman* with exultation, or forget to mourn the *death* of the *good man* with sympathetic expression. How natural, then, that I should turn your attention to a few pages in the history of a man, who has filled

every place but one, to which the ambition of an American citizen may aspire, and has filled all with distinguished credit to himself and honor to the country.

William Rufus King was a noble specimen of an American statesman and gentleman. The intimate friend of John C. Calhoun, and the contemporary of Webster, Clay, Cass, and Benton, he maintained a proud position in the Senate of the United States by his strong, practical good sense, his experience and wisdom as a legislator, the acknowledged rectitude of his intentions, and that uniform urbanity of manner which marked, not so much the man of conventional breeding, as the true gentleman at heart. He was no sophist to himself, and hence it was that he was truthful and sincere to all the world. His course in the Senate was considerate and dignified. He never yielded to the impulse of the moment, but made his tongue wait upon his judgment. He never knew what it was to speak, act, or legislate by indirection. He was frank and loyal to his colleagues, as he was devoted to his own State, and sincerely attached to the Union. Is it a wonder, then, that the Senate listened to every word which fell from his lips; that his voice was potential whenever it pleaded the cause of his country?

It is said that during a primary meeting held by one of the factions into which the first French National Convention was divided, one of the men who

afterward played a most conspicuous part in history, spoke but a few words, and these without emphasis. Yet such was the conviction he produced, that his views were instantly adopted. He possessed the genius of *character;* he believed what he said, and produced conviction in others. It is this peculiar "genius of character" which gave force and direction to Mr. KING'S speeches in the United States Senate, and produced that deference to his avowed opinions and principles which none of his colleagues shared in a more eminent degree. In all that belonged to him individually, Mr. KING was the very type of an American gentleman. Free from artifice and disguise, his every thought and instinct was chivalric. Not to adventitious circumstances, not to the chances of birth or fortune, not to the society into which he was thrown, was he indebted either for the distinction to which he rose in public life, or to the grace which adorned his private character. He never borrowed thoughts or sentiments from others. His mind and heart were of American growth, while his eminent virtues served to illustrate our national character. As Americans, we recognise no standard of greatness which is not based on moral excellence, such as pre-eminently distinguished the early founders of our institutions and laws; and, in this respect, few of the great men whose names have passed into our history can boast of a nearer approach to those great exemplars than he whose irre-

parable loss we now mourn in common with the whole country. During his long and eventful life, of which a very large portion was spent in the public service, there is not an act which can be referred to but to his honor—not a suspicion that could mar the purity and lustre of his escutcheon. Mr. KING became a member of the Senate in 1819, when the State of Alabama was admitted into the Union, and enjoyed the honor of representing her, with but one intermission, ever since. He was a member of that body when he was nominated for the Vice-Presidency, and its presiding officer. The respect of his colleagues had already assigned him the place to which he was subsequently called by the almost unanimous voice of the people. He was from principle and conviction a States' Rights man; but he did not love the Union less because he loved Alabama more. While he was serving his own State with fidelity and honor, he was not remiss in his duties to the whole American Confederacy. Like his illustrious prototype, John C. Calhoun, he battled for the rights of his State, in order to secure that harmony between Federal and State power, which is the essence of the Union, and without which it is impossible to preserve our system of self-government. In the memorable session of 1849–50, Mr. KING voted for nearly all the compromise measures as an act of devotion to the National Union, without surrendering a single cardinal point

of the political faith which had guided him through life, and had secured to him the affection and attachment of the citizens of his own State. The most important event in his political history was when he represented the United States in the Court of France, during a most interesting and exciting period. It was well known that the governments of England and France, severally and jointly, opposed the annexation of Texas to the American Union, and that similar instructions had been given by these governments to their respective ministers in Washington and Texas. These instructions were, no doubt, intended to be used with diplomatic effect; neither party seeming at the time willing to proceed to extremities. Mr. KING, true to American character, and to the generous instincts of his nature, did not plunge into the labyrinth of European diplomacy. He had nothing to disguise, nothing to withhold, nothing to ask for that was not just; and with the straightforwardness and dignity which ought always to characterize an American minister abroad, at once demanded of the King himself a frank avowal of his intentions. Louis Philippe might have been prepared to evade the artful approaches of a Talleyrand or a Richelieu, but he had no means of refusing to answer a plain question, honestly proposed by a foreign minister, whose official rank did not add the weight of a feather to the volume of his private character. Mr. KING re-

ceived the desired reply as to the final course the French government meant to adopt should Texas be annexed, and became at once satisfied that our relations with France would not be disturbed by the event. The king's reply was reported to Mr. Calhoun, then Secretary of State, and the annexation was accomplished, without even a protest from any European power. Subsequently, when the diplomatic correspondence was published, Mr. Guizot, then the French Premier, attempted to raise a question of veracity between himself and Mr. KING, in regard to the reply given by Louis Philippe to our representative in Paris. But such was the character for honesty and truth he had established for himself during his short residence in the French capital, and such the suspicions with which Mr. Guizot's acts were viewed by the French public, that there was not a single French paper which dared to doubt the word of our minister; and the aspersion was only translated from an English paper, and published in the French government journal. The object was merely to justify the policy of France as against England; but our minister's straightforward course put an end even to that subterfuge. He demanded, as a gentleman, that the King should respect the assurance given him in regard to Texas; and the King did respect it, and Mr. Guizot furnished a copy of it in writing to Mr. KING. Thus did not only our Government but the person of our minister achieve

a signal triumph over the sinuous course of European politics and statesmen.

Pending this controversy, it is said, Mr. Guizot attempted to assuage Mr. KING, by assuring him that "he had often been told that he (Guizot) lied." To which Mr. KING modestly replied, that "*he* had never been told so." French appreciation of sarcasm had no difficulty in discovering the true meaning of Mr. KING'S caustic reply. I cannot but allude to his kind and noble disposition to bring forward and advance the fortunes of young men, struggling up in life. I have myself been the recipient of his kindness in this respect. In all such relations he never assumed the position of patron and client. It was not his position, but his heart which determined the place occupied by his friends, and his exalted character looked to no return of favors. After his election to the Vice-Presidency, when lingering under a painful and mortal disease, in a foreign country, his thoughts naturally reverted to his own beloved Alabama. Once more he wished to behold the sun of his country—once more he desired to breathe the invigorating air of home. Friend and kindred had followed him abroad; but he yearned for a wider circle of hearts beating in unison with his own. The American people had taken a deep interest in his recovery. They had a pride in seeing him occupy the position to which their suffrages had raised him. They had an abiding confidence in his integrity as a

statesman, and a warm sympathy for his bodily sufferings. With breathless anxiety did the people receive the tidings of the progress of his illness, and each note of sorrow, which travelled with the velocity of light, found a painful echo in the public breast. To the people of his country did the old statesman and patriot return, to draw his last breath. Once more he trod the soil of his home; once more his eyes gladdened with the sight of his native land, —free, prosperous, and happy; once more his heart beat with rapturous delight at the future prospect and greatness of this glorious Union. The strife and clamor of ruthless partisans had subsided; the olive-leaf of peace had once more spread her blessings over twenty-five millions of contented beings; and as his dying lips murmured a blessing on them all, his pure soul was wafted to that unknown land, which, in the midst of the busy scenes of his life, his Christian heart always looked to as his last and surest resting-place.

"Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime;
And departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time.

"Footprints that perhaps another,
Sailing o'er life's solemn main—
A forlorn and shipwreck'd brother—
Seeing, shall take heart again.

"Let us, then, be up and doing,
With a heart for any fate;
Still achieving, still pursuing,
Learn to labor and to wait."

MR. TAYLOR, of Ohio, said:

MR. SPEAKER:—Death has so often invaded this House during the six years in which I have been a member of Congress, that whenever a new Congress convenes, I am strongly impressed with the conviction, that some of our body, during their term of service, must pay the debt of nature, and end their lives in the public service. The Senate, though only numbering sixty-two members, rarely passes a session without being called upon to pay the usual funeral honors to some one or more of its members. Even the Executive mansion is not unfrequently invaded by the King of Terrors; and men in public station are everywhere constantly reminded, that for life, and all their earthly blessings, they are dependent upon Him "in whose hands our breath is, and whose are all our ways."

The official announcement of the death of the Hon. WILLIAM R. KING, late Vice-President of the United States, and the well-deserved eulogies this day pronounced upon his character, bring freshly to our recollection the manly form and gentlemanly bearing of that distinguished man, and his long and eminent public service.

With the incidents of his private life and history I am not so familiar as to speak advisedly: but his personal friends upon this floor have clearly presented them for our consideration. I had the pleasure to know him for many years, as a public man; and to meet him often in the social circles of this city. And though we differed widely in our opinions upon some of the most important political questions that have lately agitated the country, I always found him mingling moderation with firmness, and a proper respect for the opinions of those who differed with him. A just and high sense of honor seemed to me to mark his public and private career; and I cheerfully express these views of the distinguished man, whose death we now commemorate, because I hold that no differences of opinion in politics should ever make us forget that we are all Americans; that we are all under the protection of the same Constitution and laws, and must share alike the benefits or evils that may result from our public actions. A higher motive should always check a too great asperity of political feeling, and inculcate a wise moderation and proper toleration toward those who differ with us. For, after all, the exertions of the wisest and the best men among us are but transient; they are vain and futile, unless sanctioned and approved by the great Author of all good. Mr. KING appeared to me possessed, in a high degree, of a wise moderation, and of a tolerant spirit; and his long experience in

public life made him eminently useful. He seemed to me to combine, in a very high degree, the strictest integrity and purest honor, and what the great poet so admirably portrays—

"With all good grace to grace a gentleman."

MR. ASHE, of North Carolina, rose, and said—

Mr. SPEAKER:—Having the honor to represent the county in which WILLIAM R. KING was born, and the larger portion of the district which first returned him as a member of this House; having enjoyed, in a manner grateful to my recollection, his friendship and confidence, and being at present the representative of a numerous and highly respectable kindred he left with us, I feel it a solemn duty that I should not allow the present occasion to pass without adding my humble but heartfelt testimonial to the truthfulness of the richly-deserved and high commendations which have been bestowed on him by the honorable gentlemen who have preceded me. After the indulgence of obsequial griefs, which are a fit tribute to departed worth, the soul thirsts to immortalize, to assimilate to itself the noble and virtuous endowments of deceased friends. Hence we have, as the remains of a venerable antiquity, the most magnificent Egyptian pyramids, splendid Grecian mausoleums, Roman sepulchres of extensive dimensions; but these were designed to portray the

outward rather than the inward man. As ancillary to the same end, various expedients and devices were adopted to perpetuate, to rescue from the destruction of time the personal appearance, after the soul had taken its flight. Vain imaginings! Empty conceits! The *recorded* reminiscence of a good work, of a charitable deed, of a benevolent thought, are worth more than a "Pelion upon Ossa" of such monuments. Posterity is grateful, and if it can be benefited by any single incident of a man's life, the character of the benefactor will be remembered and appreciated. And if his deeds of goodness should fill a volume, posterity will never weary in "turning the leaf to read it," and to acknowledge its gratitude to the author. And such a prized volume have we afforded us by the life of WILLIAM R. KING; a contemplation of which fills our hearts with gratitude, and inspires us to rejoice that as one among us he lived, and to sorrow that "he is no more."

I believe it was Philip of Macedon who gratefully sacrificed to the gods that a son had been born to him in time to derive instruction from the great philosopher Aristotle. If such was the veneration of a barbarian warrior for a heathen philosopher, how much more grateful should we feel, both as statesmen and citizens, that our lots should have been cast in the same horoscope with that of Clay, Calhoun, and King; in the history of each of whom "there is a philosophy teaching by example," well fitted to steer

our frail bark down its wayward course, clear of the dangerous rocks and shoals which are prone to wreck it. These distinguished compatriots, who, for nearly half a century, commanded the admiration of the American world, though widely differing one from another in peculiarities of character, yet each, in his life, left us a legacy, which, the more we read, the more we will appreciate.

The two former, "having gathered together their earthly harvest," previous to the adjournment of the last Congress, have received from their admiring friends that tribute of respect which we are now called upon to render to the last. While we do not claim for our distinguished friend either the thrilling eloquence of Clay, or the philosophical discrimination of Calhoun, yet, in the various positions which it was his fortune to fill, we find developed the true elements of moral and intellectual greatness.

"Perhaps one of the highest encomiums ever pronounced on a man in public life," said the late John Quincy Adams, "is that of a historian, eminent for his profound acquaintance with mankind, who, in painting a great character by a single line, says—'He was just equal to all the duties of the highest offices which he attained, and never above them. There are, in some men, qualities which dazzle and consume to little or no valuable purpose. These seldom belong to the great benefactors of mankind.'" Such were not the qualities of Colonel KING; but in

all the relations of life, in every position he attained, he was fully equal to their responsibilities, and discharged their varied duties with fidelity and ability.

Colonel KING was born in Sampson county, in my State, April, 1786. His father, William King, was a gentleman of fortune and character. During the Revolutionary war, he rendered important services to his country's cause, both by personal service and the generous use of his fortune. After the conclusion of the war, he was a member of the Convention which was called to adopt the Federal Constitution, and was repeatedly elected a Delegate to the General Assembly from his county. His situation in life enabled him to bestow on his children all the advantages of education which our country at that time afforded.

Colonel KING was sent at an early age to the University of North Carolina, located at Chapel Hill, which institution he left in his seventeenth year, bearing with him the happy consolation of having commanded the respect of his professors, the love and esteem of his associates. He studied law with William Duffy, an eminent jurist, residing in the town of Fayetteville, where he formed friendships which he preserved with affection to the day of his death. On being admitted to the bar, he settled in his native county, from which he was returned the following year as a member of the Legislature. By this body he was elected Solicitor for the Wilmington

judicial district, in which situation he continued for two years. He was then again returned to the Legislature for the years 1808–9. In the year 1810 he was elected to the Congress of the United States, being the Twelfth Congress. This was a most important crisis in our national affairs. France dominant in Europe, England mistress of the ocean, our neutrality was grossly disregarded by each of these supercilious Powers. To our menacing protests, France ultimately yielded respect. England continued her career of haughty insolence. War or national degradation was inevitable.

True republicans avoided not the issue, but met it boldly. Colonel KING acted with them with his whole soul; and, though one of the youngest members of the Congress, he was distinguished for the firm and fervid earnestness with which he supported the illustrious Madison in his patriotic efforts to sustain the honor of our country. He continued a member of Congress until after the conclusion of the war, when he accepted a diplomatic position abroad, associated with that scholar and statesman, William Pinckney. On his return from Europe, he changed his residence from North Carolina to Alabama, carrying with him the cordial respect and good wishes of all—the enmity of no one. Alabama was then a Territory, but on the eve of organizing a State Government, and as soon as it was done, she, although Colonel KING was then absent from the State, honored

him with one of her first Senatorial appointments in the Congress of the United States; a most flattering mark of confidence, which confidence he enjoyed in the amplest manner during the remainder of his long and eventful life. It is unnecessary for me to read further from the volume of his life. His subsequent career has already been detailed by able and experienced friends. What is the *lesson* which posterity can learn from this *volume? It is useful! It is significant!* Let the honor, let the happiness of our country, as with him, be our ruling aspiration; but in its advocation let us so attemper, as he did, our conduct; so dispense the charities of life, that we can command for ourselves the love of friends, the admiration of opponents. While such is the brilliant picture of his public career, his private life, his frank and confiding disposition, his uniform courtesy and kindness, the single-hearted devotedness of his friendship, his love of right, his hatred of wrong, his bold and chivalric temper, present a character worthy of our study and emulation.

> "A combination and a form indeed,
> Where every god did seem to set his seal,
> To give the world assurance of a man."

MR. BENTON, of Missouri, said:

Mr. Speaker:—The relation in which I have stood to the eminent deceased, whose loss we all deplore, must plead my excuse for a departure from

the ancient practice, which limits the number of tribute-offerers, on an occasion like the present, to the mover and seconder of the resolutions which express the sense of the House at the death of a fellow-member.

Natives of the same State, and nearly of the same age, we emigrated when young, to what was then the Far West; and by the favor of our adopted States, were both returned, and nearly at the same time, to occupy seats on the floor of the American Senate. Commencing—he in 1819, I in 1820—we remained for thirty years, (with the exception of the brief interval in which he represented his country at a foreign court,) members of the same body—intimately associated in all the current business of that body, and in all the amenities of social and private life.

But my knowledge of him goes beyond thirty years—goes back to forty—and not then to the beginning of his Congressional service—when I first saw him on this floor. And I mention this first time of seeing him, and in what place, to do honor to the *public man* who could so long retain the confidence of his constituents; and to their honor for the steadiness of their support; and to the credit of our institutions, to which such stability between constituent and representative promises a duration, not to be measured by the brief lives of those republics whose people were given up to fickleness and versatility.

These circumstances plead my excuse for departing from a custom which limited the number of those who should have the privilege of expressing, in the presence of the national representation, their own, and the general feeling, at the demise of a brother member.

The members who have preceded me have stated, and well stated, the illustrious career of the deceased —tracing his course through a long gradation, always rising, of public honors—from the General Assembly of his native State, to the second office of his country —the Vice-Presidency of this great Republic.

To me it only belongs to join my voice to theirs, and to the voices of all who knew him, in celebrating the integrity and purity of his life—the decorum of his manners—his assiduous and punctual attention to every duty—and the ability and intelligence which he brought to the discussion of the national affairs during his long service of thirty years.

Faithful to his adopted State, he exhibited, when duty to her permitted, the beautiful trait of filial affection to the honored State of his birth—a State which has so many claims upon her children, (besides that of having first given them the vital air,) for their constant and grateful remembrance—whereso-ever they may go.

As friend, as associate, as native of the same State with the late Vice-President KING, I appear on this occasion, and feel it to be, in me,—his senior in age,

—a providential privilege to assist in doing honor to his memory in the presence of the national representation.

MR. PHILIPS, of Alabama, said:

MR. SPEAKER:—I cannot permit this occasion to pass by, without paying tribute to the memory of the deceased.

It is not, sir, to contribute to a mere ceremony, or to conform to any public expectation, that I now occupy the floor. My feelings are far too deep for such lip-service demonstration.

It was my fortune, Mr. Speaker, to have enjoyed the full confidence and friendship of WILLIAM R. KING, for the whole period of my residence in the State which I have now the honor to represent. I early learned to appreciate his high qualities; and time, which tests all things, served but to confirm my judgment. I may now safely say of him dead, what, with equal confidence, I may have said were he now living, that the Republic never produced a man of more exalted integrity, or of a higher chivalry of character.

I visited Washington for the first time a few years ago, and though it has been said, (with what truth I cannot assert,) that corruption here stalks at noonday, it was with just pride as an Alabamian, that I learned from all quarters and all parties, that through his long service in the public councils of upward of

a quarter of a century, he had not only preserved his reputation intact, but freed even from the breath of suspicion.

It was this purity of character, joined to the high qualities of a remarkably well-balanced mind, that enabled him to enjoy, for so long a period, the confidence of the people of his own State, and of the whole Confederacy.

He has filled the highest offices, and discharged the weightiest duties, with honor to himself and advantage to his country; well, therefore, may we conclude, in the language of the Presidential Message, that the death of such a man is an irreparable loss to the country.

A great man has fallen, and it is fit we mourn him! Dying, as he lived, with a full knowledge of the past, and a just appreciation of the future, may I not indulge in the hope, that the light of his example may long continue to illuminate the path of the future Representatives of the State which holds his remains and cherishes his memory!

The question was taken, and the resolutions were unanimously adopted.

SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES,

DECEMBER 9, 1853.

PURSUANT to adjournment, the Court met this morning at the Capitol:

PRESENT—

The Honorable ROGER B. TANEY, Chief Justice.

JOHN MCLEAN,
JAMES M. WAYNE,
JOHN CATRON,
PETER V. DANIEL,
SAMUEL NELSON,
ROBERT G. GRIER,
BENJ. R. CURTIS, JR.
JOHN A. CAMPBELL,
} Associate Justices.

JONAH D. HOOVER, Esquire, Marshal.

WILLIAM THOMAS CARROLL, Clerk.

Proclamation being made, the Court is opened.

At the opening of the Court this morning, Mr. CUSHING, the Attorney-General of the United States, addressed the Court as follows:

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR HONORS:—I rise to submit a motion which seems to be called for by the nature

of the subject-matter. God, in his inscrutable but supreme will, has removed from the service of the country, and from that path of honor which, through a long lifetime of greatness and goodness, he had so nobly trod, the Vice-President of the United States. When the voice of some future panegyrist, on the banks of the Mississippi, the Bravo, or the Columbia, shall speak of the heroes, the legislators, the statesmen, and the magistrates of our country, as he recounts the names borne on that glorious roll of immortality, he cannot fail to pause with unalloyed satisfaction at the name of WILLIAM R. KING. Providence from time to time raises up men to lead armies on to victory through the clash of the battle-field, or by rare gifts of written or spoken thought to wield, at will, the fiercest impulses of nations. Such men, if they have a superlatively splendid career, yet have an agitated one. They create events, and they partake of the vicissitudes of events. They may, they often do, have shaded sides of the mental formation, without which the bright ones would be too dazzlingly brilliant. They come to be praised or dispraised alternately, according to the light in which their actions are viewed, and the flux or reflux of the tides of popular emotion. If WILLIAM R. KING be not of these, yet he has an appropriate and perhaps a more enviable place in the temple of fame and in the hearts of Americans. For of him it is with plainest truth to be said, that

with lofty elements in his character to merit and receive the most absolute commendation, there is nothing in it open to censure. He stands to the memory, in sharp outline, as it were, against the sky, like some chiselled column of antique art, or some consular statue of the imperial republic wrapped in its marble robes, grandly beautiful in the simple dignity and unity of a faultless proportion.

Placed at an early age in that august assembly, the highest, all things considered, in this or any other land—the Senate of the United States—and continuing there, save with brief interruption of the most eminent diplomatic employment, during a whole generation of time, and repeatedly elevated to preside over its deliberations, he had grown to be, not of it merely, but its representative man, its typical person, its all-conspicuous model of an upright, pure, spotless, high-minded, chivalric American Senator. This it is, in my judgment, which constitutes the distinctive trait in his character and career, and which drew to him the veneration and the confidence of his countrymen. We think of him almost as an historical monument of senatorial integrity, rather than as a mere mortal man of the age. Like that gallant soldier, who received the baton of marshal in the very scene of his achievements, and fell, struck by a cannon-shot, in the act of grasping the insignia of his command, so the Vice-President

did but reach the pinnacle of his greatness to die. Such a death, so timed, though premature for us whom he has left behind to the toils and cares of public duty, was not premature for the consummate completeness of his renown. Knowing how deeply his loss must be deplored by your Honors, it is deemed fitting for me to move that this Court, in unison with what has been done by the two Houses of Congress, do now adjourn, in manifestation of its respect for the memory of the deceased Vice-President of the United States.

To which Mr. CHIEF-JUSTICE TANEY replied:

The Court is sensible that every mark of respect is due to the memory of the late Vice-President, WILLIAM R. KING.

His life was passed in the public service, and marked, throughout it, by its purity, integrity, and disinterested devotion to the public good.

It is true, that no part of it connected him particularly with the judicial branch of this Government. But the people of the United States had elevated him to the highest office but one in their gift; and the loss of a Statesman like him, so honored, and so worthy of the honor bestowed, is felt to be a public calamity by this department of Government, as well as by that to which he more immediately belonged. And as a token of their high respect for

him while living, and their sincere sorrow for his death, the Court will adjourn to-day without transacting its ordinary business.

TEST: WM. THOS. CARROLL,
Clerk of Supreme Court U. S.

THE END.

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